



The stretch of Interstate 270 between Interstate 44 and I-64 is one of the most heavily traveled sections of interstate in the St. Louis greater metropolitan area. On average, between 175,000 and 185,000 vehicles travel the section of interstate each day. During morning and evening rush periods, the heavy levels of traffic cause significant backup. In the morning, traffic on northbound I-270 backs up from about Big Bend to Gravois (Route 30). In the evening, it is not unusual to have traffic backups on southbound I-270 from Dougherty Ferry to Olive Boulevard (Route 340) or Page Avenue (Route 364). A significant amount of merging traffic from I-44, railroad bridges with columns just off the roadway and the rock bluffs on the east side of the roadway all contribute to overall congestion on the interstate.

During a typical weekday morning commute, traffic slows to 35 miles an hour in this stretch of northbound I-270. It takes about 10 minutes more to drive this stretch of roadway than when the roadway isn't congested.

There is no easy solution to all of the problems, since there is so much traffic moving between so many different places. A portion of the solution involves increasing the merge lanes from Watson and eastbound and westbound I-44 onto northbound I-270 and adding one more through lane onto northbound I-270 between I-44 and Manchester Road. MoDOT is also adding an additional through lane on southbound I-270 between Dougherty Ferry and I-44. Because of the restrictions on the roadway, MoDOT will be widening the roadway somewhat, but will have to permanently narrow all lanes on northbound and southbound I-270 to 11 feet (the same width as I-44 during the I-64 reconstruction in 2009 and 2010). As much as possible, MoDOT will maintain full shoulders along the roadway.

These improvements should increase the average speed to 50 mph during the morning commute and reduce the delay (the additional time needed to drive this stretch of I-170) to three minutes.

The Federal Highway Administration requires MoDOT to conduct a sound study when the department adds additional through lanes to an existing highway. This sound study is the start of the sound wall process. Sound walls must meet all of the following criteria to be installed, based on MoDOT policy:

- 1) Noise levels must be 66 decibels or above (equal to a normal conversation at three feet.)
- 2) Sound walls must be able to reduce the noise levels by at least five decibels.

- 3) Sound walls may be no taller than 18 feet.
- 4) Sound walls must not interfere with roadway or property access
- 5) Sound walls must not pose a safety hazard.
- 6) Sound walls must benefit more than one homeowner (a benefitted homeowner is one where the noise levels are above 66 decibels and a sound wall can reduce those noise levels by at least five decibels).in the regular outdoor living area
- 7) A majority of benefitted residents must want a sound wall (simple vote on each wall)
- 8) Any sound wall must cost less than \$30,000 per benefitted homeowner (a homeowner where noise levels are above 66 and a sound wall can reduce noise by at least five decibels).

These criteria are based on Federal Highway standards and policy.

MoDOT has completed the sound study and made determinations on which areas, to this point, have met the criteria. Out of 16 areas studied, only four may still qualify for sound walls.

Right now, MoDOT designers are working on the plans for the widening project. In September 2011, we met with residents in the sound study area to explain whether their area qualified for sound walls or not. Due to some changes in plans, we had another soundwall meeting in January 2012. In late January 2012, MoDOT will meet with the general public to discuss the overall impact of the project (schedule, lane closures, access and the like). This meeting will allow the department to make any final adjustments to the plans before awarding a contract in early 2012, with work to start in spring 2012. The project will take two years, with the project ending in December 2013.

I-270 widening sound wall meeting

Sign-In Sheet

please print

FIRST & LAST NAME

ADDRESS

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